



ACCFS Courses

## Course Notes

# Core 8: Building Vulnerable Community



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

**Counseling and Family Services**

*Helping the hurting. Nurturing hope. Encouraging growth.*

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These course notes were created to accompany participants enrolled in the ACCFS Core 8: Building Vulnerable Community Course.

## Introduction

By nature of the lives we lead and the world we live in, we share common pain. This pain is not unique to our age or location but is common to all people everywhere and for all time. If not handled properly, pain can cause spiritual, emotional and relational struggle. Very often, people live their lives limping from pain not suitably cared for.

### 8 Common Sources of Pain:

- **Shame** - the pain of rejection.
- **Loss** - the pain of losing something or someone.
- **Hurt** - the pain of emotional wounds.
- **Lies** - the pain of misbelief.
- **Fear** - the pain of anxiety.
- **Sin** - the pain of disobedience.
- **Inability** - the pain of disability.
- **Insecurity** - the pain of self question.

Furthermore, properly handling this pain is best done in a safe Christian community. Thus...

*This course has more to do with building community than it does with the pain itself.*

### This course has two goals:

*Goal One: Participants will build community.*

*Goal Two: Participants will learn how to treat 8 sources of pain.*



*We get more out of Bible studies and fellowship groups when we have focus. Having personal goals are a good way to achieve this focus.*

**Lesson 1:**

## From Isolation to Community

***We have been created for relationship.***

“It is not good that man is alone” God said early in the Genesis narrative. We do not do well in isolation. Community is the infrastructure for proper human care. It is community that cradles us in our joys and sorrows. This course is built around fellowship with others. Each lesson will wield the value of community. A community you will contribute to and benefit from.

**There are three goals for this lesson:**

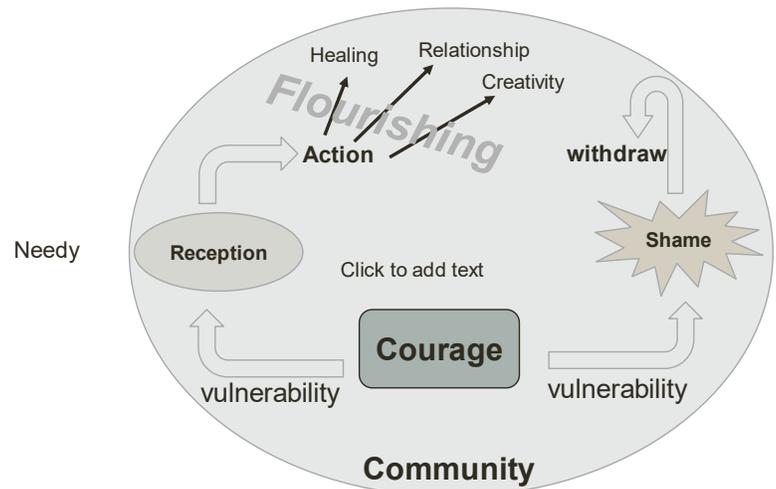
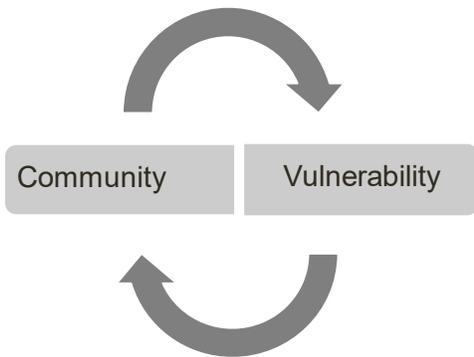
- Define what we mean by “community.”
- Understand why “community” is important.
- Learn how to build community.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

## Content

Community and vulnerability go hand-in-glove. **Watch the explanation video linked in the lesson.**



Video Notes:

Community is not easily defined. You could say it is caught more than it is taught. Sometimes story, example and testimony are the best ways to learn what it means to be in community.

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more content on community, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

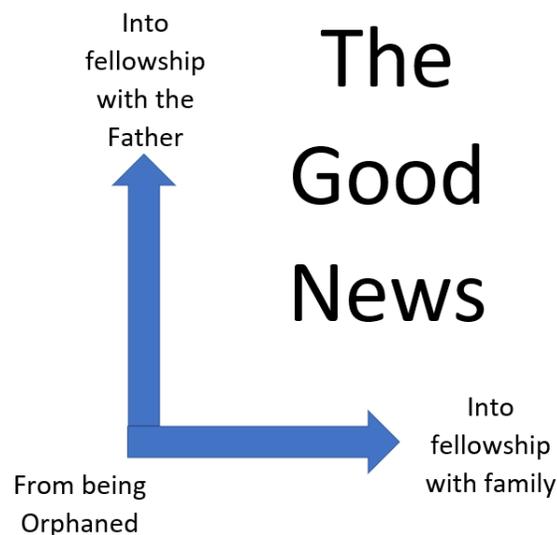
*“That where I am, there ye may be also.”*

These are the words of Jesus recorded in *John 14*. **Relationship, oneness and dwelling with Jesus** lie at the center of his intentions. His death and resurrection made this promise possible. By faith in Christ, he welcomes us to Him and we welcome Him into us by his Holy Spirit.

**Yet,**

God’s vision for community is more than that. We along with all those who repent of our sins are born into His family. Together we form the necessary community for ongoing spiritual care and maintenance. The **GOOD NEWS** of the Gospel is multi-faceted. We are saved to God **AND** we are saved to each other. Just as an adopted orphan wins a father AND a family, we too,

*win a heavenly Father and a spiritual family.*



***Membership in a believing community is part of God’s redemptive vision for saving souls.***

***“They were a membership.  
A mere gathering.  
Not held together by power  
and organization like an army  
but by kinship, friendship, history,  
memory, kindness and affection.”  
— Wendell Berry***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE  
& READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Commit this course group to God for the purpose of meaningful community.  
Record your prayer in the online course.*

**There were three goals for this lesson:**

- We defined “community.”
- We understand why “community” is important.
- We learned fundamentally how to build community.

## **Lesson 2**

### **From Shame to Worth**

***Shame is the belief that if others knew the truth about me they would reject me and be right for doing so.***

Shame sends us into hiding. Shame keeps us from healing. Fortunately there is a remedy for shame. That remedy is a loving community.

#### **There are three goals for this lesson:**

- Understand what shame is.
- Understand your worth in Christ.
- Learn how to reverse the shame script.

**Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:

## Content

Watch the “Shepherding Shame” video linked in the course. Follow along with the notes below.

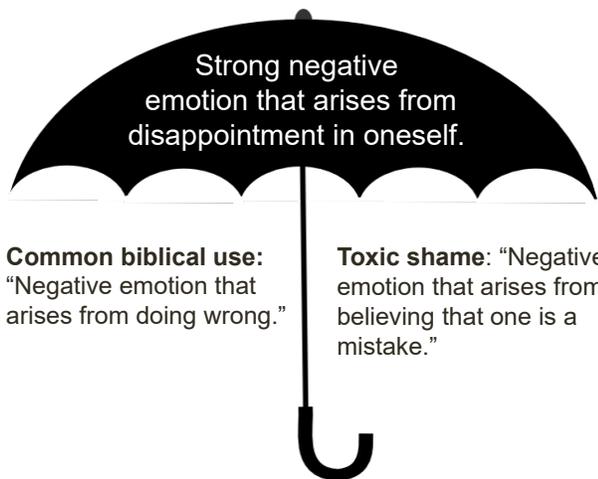
### Dealing With Shame

Genesis 3:8-11

### Our Aspiration

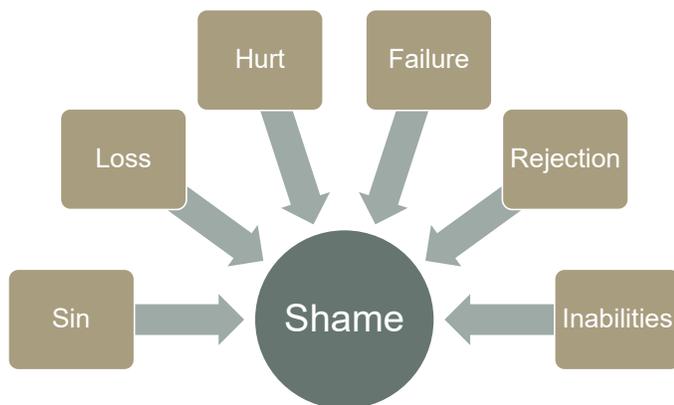
That we, following Adam’s example, would be those who are called out from hiding.  
That we, following God’s example, would be those who receive people out from hiding.

### What is Shame?

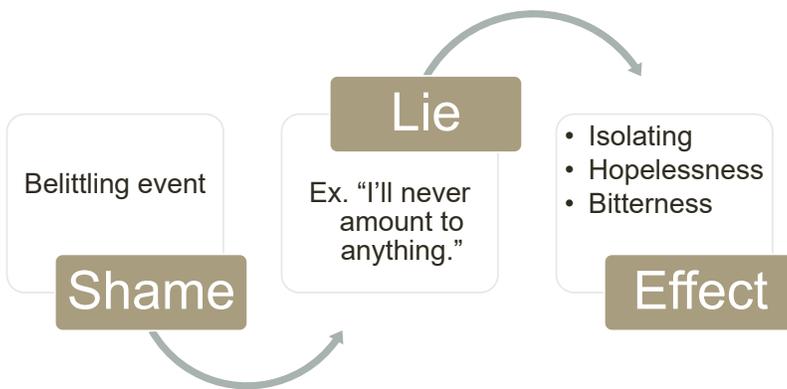


**Working Definition of Shame:**  
The negative feeling that arises when we are disappointed in ourselves and propels us away from the source of our healing.

### Where does Shame Come From?



### What are the Effects of Shame?



### What are a Few Things to Remember About Shame?

- Shame shames.
- Shame acts as a negative “script” that runs in our heads.
- We will shame and will be shamed.
- Even a non-shaming intent can incite shame.
- Shame plays on lies and perpetuates lies.

### How do I Encourage a Person Struggling with Shame?

- Reverse their shame “script.” Counter their lie with truth.
- Honor the essence of their “being” apart from their behavior or circumstances.
- Don’t give up. Be patient.
- Communicate to them that you “want them on your team.”

### ***Worth in Christ***

Read the “Worth in Christ” article linked in the course.

Article notes:

***Guilt & Shame Contrasted***

Review the shame vs guilt comparison chart below.

<b>Guilt</b>	<b>Shame</b>
• Stems from truth.	• Stems from lies.
• Says I made a mistake.	• Says I am a mistake.
• Intends to draw us toward God.	• Intends to push us away from God.
• Drives us into community.	• Drives us into isolation.
• Seeks reconciliation.	• Leaves us condemned.
• Suggests there is hope.	• Suggests there is no hope.
• Is because God loves us.	• Is because Satan hates us.
• Has a route to restoration.	• Does not have a route to restoration.

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more content on the topic of shame, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

Children are not the only ones that play “hide-and-seek.” We adults are very skilled at the game. Unlike children, who love being found, **we are masters at the conceal because we dread the reveal.** In Genesis, Adam and Eve go into hiding. When God makes his approach he calls out to Adam. He asks him why he has gone into hiding and who told him he was naked. Not only did sin enter the world that day, but shame also. As if to say, Satan put a new banner over the creation that God had pronounced as “very good.” Satan’s banner over mankind was these are “unwanted and unworthy.”

***To draw out shame’s poison, Jesus endured and defeated shame on the cross.***

*“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)*

Because of the work of Christ, Satan’s banner over mankind can be rolled back. **He restores fellowship with God** for those who repent (come out of hiding). While Jesus has done the deep cleaning shame requires, he leaves for the spiritual family work to do in caring for the shame its members endure. After all, the shame script that says “If they know who I am, I will be rejected and they would be right in doing so” is most **dismantled** when certain individuals in the community know who “I am” and **don’t reject me.**

***Instead, they love me in reparative ways.***

When this happens, we capture the innocence of a child. **The child who delights in being found.**

***“I am beginning now to see how radically the character of my spiritual journey will change when I no longer think of God as hiding out and making it difficult as possible for me to find him, but, instead, as the one who is looking for me while I am doing the hiding.”***  
**— Henri Nouwen**

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE & READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Commit your tendency to hide from God here. Welcome his approach.  
Record your prayer in the online course.*

**This lesson attempted to accomplish the following:**

- You understand what shame is.
- You understand your worth in Christ.
- You learned how to reverse the shame script.

Reversing the shame script requires a community. This group can serve as that community. Your participation is required for helping fellow group members deal with their shame.

**Lesson 3**

## From Loss to Peace

***Loss is a common experience.***

We have all suffered disappointment from losing something or someone we hold dear. Like a thumb print, which we all have and are unique, so is loss - common and unique. Loss comes in all shapes and sizes. Some loss is open and obvious to others, other losses are private. Some losses are easily defined while others are ambiguous. Yet common to all loss is pain and common to all pain is grief. And the purpose of grief is to send us toward healing.

**There are two goals for this lesson:**

- Understand the grief cycle and the healing that results.
- Support one another in the losses we endure.

**Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:

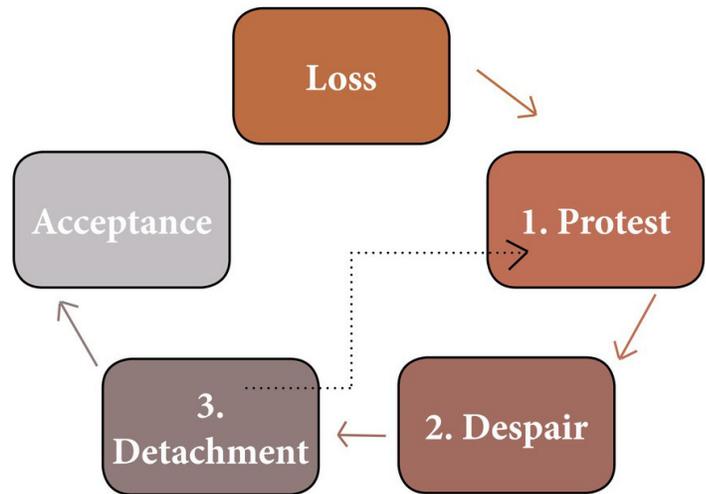
## Content

Learn more about loss, grief and healing by reading the article and watching the short video at the link in the course.

### Phases of Grief

1. Protest
2. Despair
3. Detachment

Article & video notes:



Grieving disappointment is a discipline of the Christian life. It goes by the name “lament.”  
Learn more about this with the article and video at the link below.

### A Sorrow Expressed

Article & video notes:

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more content on the topic of loss and grief, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

Jesus announced his purpose at the beginning of His ministry.  
He used this prophecy from *Isaiah 61* to explain it.

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;* <sup>2</sup> *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;* <sup>3</sup> *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*

Here we see Jesus tie our losses very closely with his gospel purposes.

### ***The Gospel has a shape to it.***



That shape is seen here in this prophecy and ultimately will find its imprint in the death and resurrection of Jesus.  
As believers, we identify ourselves with Christ.

### ***We take on His shape.***

Repentance followed by resurrection bears the image of the gospel's shape.  
Furthermore, this shape **reverberates through all of our life.**

### ***We become image bearers of the Gospel.***

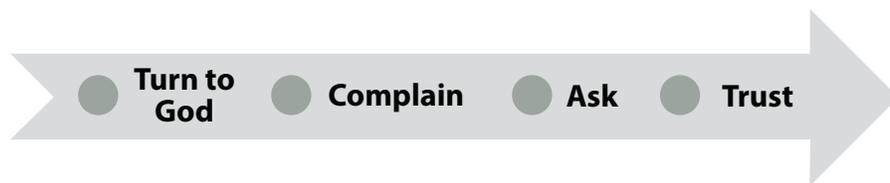
Losses are one example where **we bear this gospel shape.**

Very often, when we properly grieve our losses, they too **have a redemption that can glorify Christ.**

***“You will learn that sometimes pain can do what even joy cannot, such as exposing the vanity of earth’s trifles and filling your heart with longing for the peace of heaven.”***  
**— A.W. Tozer**

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE & READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Commit your loss to God through lament. Record your prayer in the online course.*



**There were two goals for this lesson:**

- Understand the grief cycle and the healing that results.
- Support one another in the losses we endure.

Losses are very personal. Guard against comparing your losses to those of others. Each one has trusted their losses to you in this lesson. Learn each one’s losses, and help them grieve, lament or see the Gospel shape in them.

**Lesson 4**

## From Hurt to Healing

***Hurts are wounds. Wounds unhealed become irritants and irritants are a contagion to relational, emotional and spiritual health.***

It is important to attend to physical wounds. If you don't, negative effects compound. For the same reason it is important to attend to relational, emotional and spiritual wounds.

**There are two goals for this lesson:**

- Understand the nature of “shedding hurt” as it relates to the following:
  - Anger
  - Forgiveness
  - Disappointments
- Understand the nature of bitterness and how to overcome it.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

## **Content**

In the podcast linked in the lesson, Ted Witzig Jr. helps us understand the critical discipline of “shedding hurt.”

### ***Shedding Hurt***

Podcast notes:

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more relevant content, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

The point of the story could not have been missed. Jesus, the master of story, knew when and how to tell one. The point was to help his students understand the “kingdom of heaven.” The children had thronged him just earlier. He had highlighted their **innocence**. Their **humility**. Their **vulnerability**. Don’t you dare wound them, Jesus said. Later, Peter asks an adult question.

*“How many times should we forgive those who have wounded us?”*

Peter offers to answer his own question, with a **generous, humble, vulnerable** “*seven times?*”

Jesus had an alarming metric for which he was going to measure the forgiveness accustomed to the Kingdom of Heaven. “There was a certain king who had a debtor who owed him a great deal.” A very great debt. “But it seemed good according to his mercy to forgive the debtor.” His very great debt. **The debtor rejoiced.**

Yet, that same debtor had a debtor of his own. He was owed a little bit. A VERY little bit. With unforgiveness in his heart, he **demanded** payment of the very little debt. The king, having heard the unforgiveness of this forgiven debtor was angry. **Very angry.** And so Christ laid to to the heart of citizens of the kingdom this one metric for forgiveness.

***We forgive because we have been forgiven.***

A great BIG debt.

***“To forgive is to set a prisoner free  
and discover that the prisoner was you.”  
— Lewis B. Smedes***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE  
& READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Give a specific hurt of yours to God. Ask Him to begin a journey of healing.  
Record your prayer in the online course.*

**There were two goals for this lesson:**

- Understand the nature of “shedding hurt” as it relates to the following:
  - Anger
  - Forgiveness
  - Disappointments
- Understand the nature of bitterness and how to overcome it.

It requires vulnerability to share wounds. We naturally want to hide them. It therefore, is a honor to learn of another’s wounds. Remember to hold these in strict confidence and do not compare other’s hurts with yours. Furthermore, helping another work through anger, pain and bitterness is the stuff the Gospel is made of. God’s blessings be on you as you do this important work.

## Lesson 5

### From Lies to Truth

#### ***What we believe makes a difference.***

After all, our beliefs form up our thoughts. Our thoughts give way to feelings and our feelings motivate our behavior. Many of our wanted and unwanted behaviors, can be traced back to our beliefs. It is so important then our beliefs are true. After all, every false belief begins a cause-and-effect chain reaction with an unhealthy result every time.

#### **There are four goals for this lesson:**

- We will identify where lies come from.
- We will see the effect lies have on us?
- We will learn how to get rid of lies.
- We will begin to identify lies we believe.

**Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:

## Content

Listen to the podcast episodes on “Upsetting Lies” at the link in the lesson.

### *Upsetting Lies*

Podcast notes:

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more relevant content, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

Jesus announced Himself as **the True one**. He said, *"I am the truth."*  
We understand Satan as **the lying one**. We read that he is *"the father of lies."*

This cosmic battle about what is true has been around for a long time.  
At every turn we see truth about God and ourselves in the cross-hairs.

**Is God good? Is God right? Who is God?  
Additionally, Am I loved? Am I lost? Who am I?**

Satan has answers for these questions. You can be sure... **they will be false!** And will lead to hurt.  
Jesus has answers for these questions. You can be sure... **they will be true!** And will lead to health.

***Wonderfully, Jesus died and  
rose from the dead to defeat the deceiver.  
And the lies he spreads.***

<sup>4</sup>There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>One Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. <sup>7</sup>But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ...<sup>13</sup>Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: <sup>14</sup>That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to **deceive**; <sup>15</sup>But **speaking the truth** in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

***“Your internal monologue is the never-silent stream of words or images running through your head night and day, the automatic thoughts that habitually pop into your head unbidden, generated automatically from your beliefs.”  
— William Backus***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE & READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Share one or more lies you believe to God. Ask him to correct your thinking according to his truth. Record your prayer in the online course.*

### **There were four goals for this lesson:**

- We identified where lies come from.
- We saw the effect lies have on us.
- We learned how to get rid of lies.
- We began to identify lies we believe.

Community holds hopeful promise for rewriting misbeliefs. Since so many of our lies are spoken and reinforced in the chamber of our heads, we need voices from without. The community of believers is a critical voice of correction. Be that voice for those in your group who need to hear truth.

**Lesson 6**

## From Fear to Courage

***The uneasy feeling that something is wrong.***

This is an all too real and frequent feeling. It goes by many names - worry, stress, anxiety, fear. It comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes. It rises from a variety of different origins: circumstances, lack of faith, brain chemistry. Fears are resilient. It doesn't need to be real, it can play on fabrication. It doesn't need to be in the present, it can fixate on the future. It doesn't only play in our heads, but it affects our bodies also. And strangely, fears are not always bad. How then, do we approach them?

**There are three goals for this lesson:**

- Understand the nature of fear - stress, worry and anxiety.
- Learn how believers walk with anxiety.
- Support each other in the fears we may be experiencing.

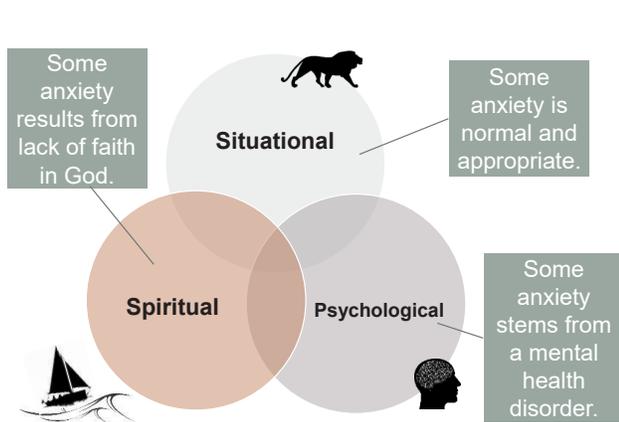
Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

Intro video notes:

## Content

Watch the video in the lesson on “Faithfully Walking with Anxiety.”

*Stress, worry & anxiety: The vague sense that something is wrong. —William Backus*



### Two Methods for Dealing with Anxiety

#### 1. Absolving the Anxiety

- Correct the circumstances.
- Avoid negative feelings.

#### 2. Living with the Anxiety

- Face the fear.
- Check your thinking.
- Trust in the Lord.

*Believers can walk faithfully with anxiety.*

<p>1st They faced their fear.</p>	<p>2nd They checked their thinking.</p>	<p>3rd They trusted in the Lord.</p>
<p>Often, anxiety motivates avoidance. Accept that stress, worry and anxiety will be present in your life.</p>	<p>Often, anxiety is not the result of unbelief, but rather misbelief. Challenge misbelief with truth.</p>	<p>Often, anxiety does not see God’s grace in the feared event. Shift your focus from the fear to the Lord.</p>

Watch the videos in the lesson on “Learning from Elijah’s Example,” “Learning from David’s Example,” “Learning from Abraham’s Example” and “Learning from Martha’s Example.”

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Watch the conclusion video in the lesson.

<b>1st Face the fear.</b>	<b>2nd Check your thinking.</b>	<b>3rd Trust in the Lord.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does avoidance look like?</li><li>• What does moving forward look like?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the nature of your thoughts. Is there a misbelief?</li><li>• What truth counters that misbelief?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the stem “Even if _____ happens, God’s grace will be there.”</li><li>• Shift your focus away from the source of fear and onto a matter that you can control and glorify God in.</li></ul>

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more relevant content, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

Did Jesus ever experience anxiety? I think so.  
In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus “sweat drops of blood.”  
“Father if there be any other way!” was his prayer.

This is a prayer for... **escape!**  
Jesus understands what it feels like to want to recoil from the threat of anxiety.

But... **He didn't.**  
Jesus said unto Peter,  
“the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”  
Jesus faced His fear, and in so doing,  
He secured our ransom from Satan and into His love.  
A love, that...  
**casts out fear.**

***Fear has two meanings:  
'forget everything and run' or  
'face everything and rise.'  
— Zig Ziglar***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE  
& READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Confess your fears to God and ask Him to give you the grace to face them.  
Record your prayer in the online course.*

### **There were three goals for this lesson:**

- We now understand the nature of fear - stress, worry and anxiety.
- We learned how believers walk with anxiety.
- Now we can support each other in the fears we may be experiencing.

To truly encourage someone, it is necessary to know what they fear. After all, **encouragement** is just that, helping another person find **courage** in the matter that is the source of their fear. The community of this group holds promise for encouraging you in your fear and you encouraging others in theirs.

**Lesson 7**

## From Inability to Capability

***“My strength is made perfect in weakness.”***  
**— Jesus**

This is upside down thinking for sure. It’s not easy to grab hold of either. Especially when our inabilities more often give rise to pain and not worship. We are in good company, however, if we have found ourselves praying that God would repair our inabilities. Paul did. Moses did.

**We have three goals for this lesson:**

- Living responsibly with our limitations.
- Living responsibly with our weaknesses.
- Knowing the difference between them.

**Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:

## Content

Learn about “inabilities” by watching the video linked in the lesson.

### ***Inability to Capability***

#### **Limitations - I can not.**

- I will never be able to do this.
- Mindset: We live with brokenness.
- Responsibility: Total Acceptance

#### **Weakness - I possibly can.**

- This comes hard but I can improve.
- Mindset: God gave us the capacity to grow.
- Responsibility: Personal Stewardship

Video notes:

Learn about spiritual gifts in the article linked in the course.

### ***Spiritual Gifts***

Article notes:

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more relevant content, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.*  
It's easy to miss. The mere fact that...

### Jesus sees.

He sees inabilities, personal limitations, brokenness.  
Unlike me, **Jesus doesn't** divert his eyes. Pretend to not see.  
Or tell himself it's "not as bad as it might appear."

### No

*Jesus engaged the brokenness of this world.*  
All of it. In all of its forms.

### Fully.

"Who did sin? This man or his parents?" asked the disciples.  
We are always happy to find a reason that **absolves ourselves** of pity.  
Or worse... **responsibility!**

Christ's answer?

*"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."*

Herein is the gospel tremendously and **surprisingly** good news.  
Not only does Christ win us an inheritance untainted by brokenness - **heaven**.  
**But**, He also is strong over brokenness as it exists in our today.  
That is to say... Christ doesn't have to have it His way to show His majesty.  
A new heaven and a new earth without the traces of brokenness.  
But, **He can show His majesty while the fall is still in force.**

*"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

Jesus told the disciples.  
And to accent the point...

### He healed the blind man.

***“O my Lord, I am not eloquent,  
but I am slow of speech,  
and of a slow tongue.  
And the Lord said unto him,  
Who hath made man’s mouth?  
Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf,  
or the seeing, or the blind?  
Have not I the Lord?”  
Exodus 4:10, 11***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE  
& READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: What limitations do you struggle under? Express those to God and pray He can be glorified in them. Record your prayer in the online course.*

**We had three goals for this lesson:**

- We learned how to live responsibly with our limitations.
- We learned how to live responsibly with our weaknesses.
- We learned the difference between the two.

It takes wisdom, to know what of our lives are limitations to accept and what are weaknesses to grow and improve in. But both hold the possibility of glorifying Christ. In fact they are intended to.

**Lesson 8**

## From Sin to Righteousness

***“Sin is an anesthetic of the soul which prohibits satisfaction.”  
— Joshua Gibbs***

**Can this quote really be true?**

As Christians, our guilty standing has been reversed. Jesus has paid for our sin. Yet, our guilty feelings persist. “Besetting sins” make a meal of us. For many, they are a source of threatening doubt. The Christian community plays an important role in ministering God’s reparative and prohibitive grace to each other.

- **Reparative grace** - the grace of Christ that washes away sin.
- **Prohibitive grace** - the grace of Christ that empowers us to walk free of sin.

**This lesson has three goals:**

- Understand the nature of sin as an anesthetic of the soul.
- Understand the role believers play in disciplining each other into holiness.
- Learn a few tools in ministering reparative and prohibitive grace.

Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.

**Intro video notes:**

## Content

Watch the video linked in the lesson regarding sin in a believer's life.

### ***From Sin to Righteousness***

**GOAL: MAKE SIN DISCUSSABLE.**

*...that we might live lives full of power and faith*

1. The besetting sin of a believer.  
*A believer's "besetting" sin is that sin that he most struggles with and is most inclined to perform.*
2. The nature of temptation.  
*Temptation offers us the lesser of two evils.*
3. The appeal of sin to the believer.  
*Sin promises the power to satisfy one's desires. However. Evil is the lack of power.*
4. Sin's lie to the believer.  
*Anesthesia of the soul - self forgetfulness.*
5. Sin's desired end for the believer.  
*Exiled from God.*
6. The power of love.  
*Love and obedience are linked, they both give rise to the other.*
7. Reparative grace for the believer.  
*1 John 1:9*
8. Prohibitive grace for the believer.  
*Rom 6:14*

*So that we can confess, admonish, challenge, discipline, encourage and support one another to the end that we might live lives full of power, and faith.*

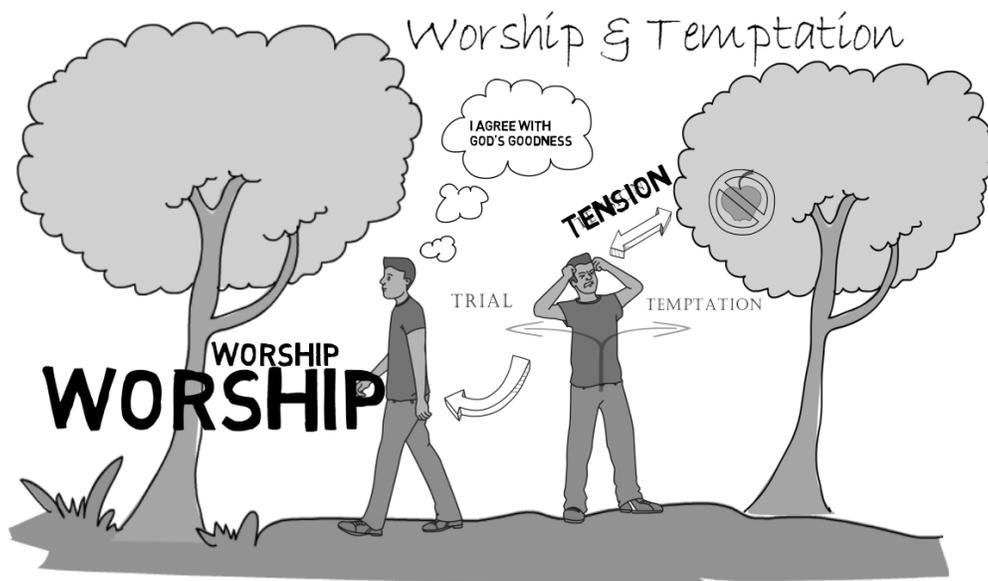
Read the article at the link in the course that outlines 4 refreshing facts about the satisfaction of God.

### Craving for Quenching

Article notes:

Watch the videoscribe linked in the lesson. The videoscribe, “Worship and Temptation,” helps us understand the advantage that temptation provides the believer.

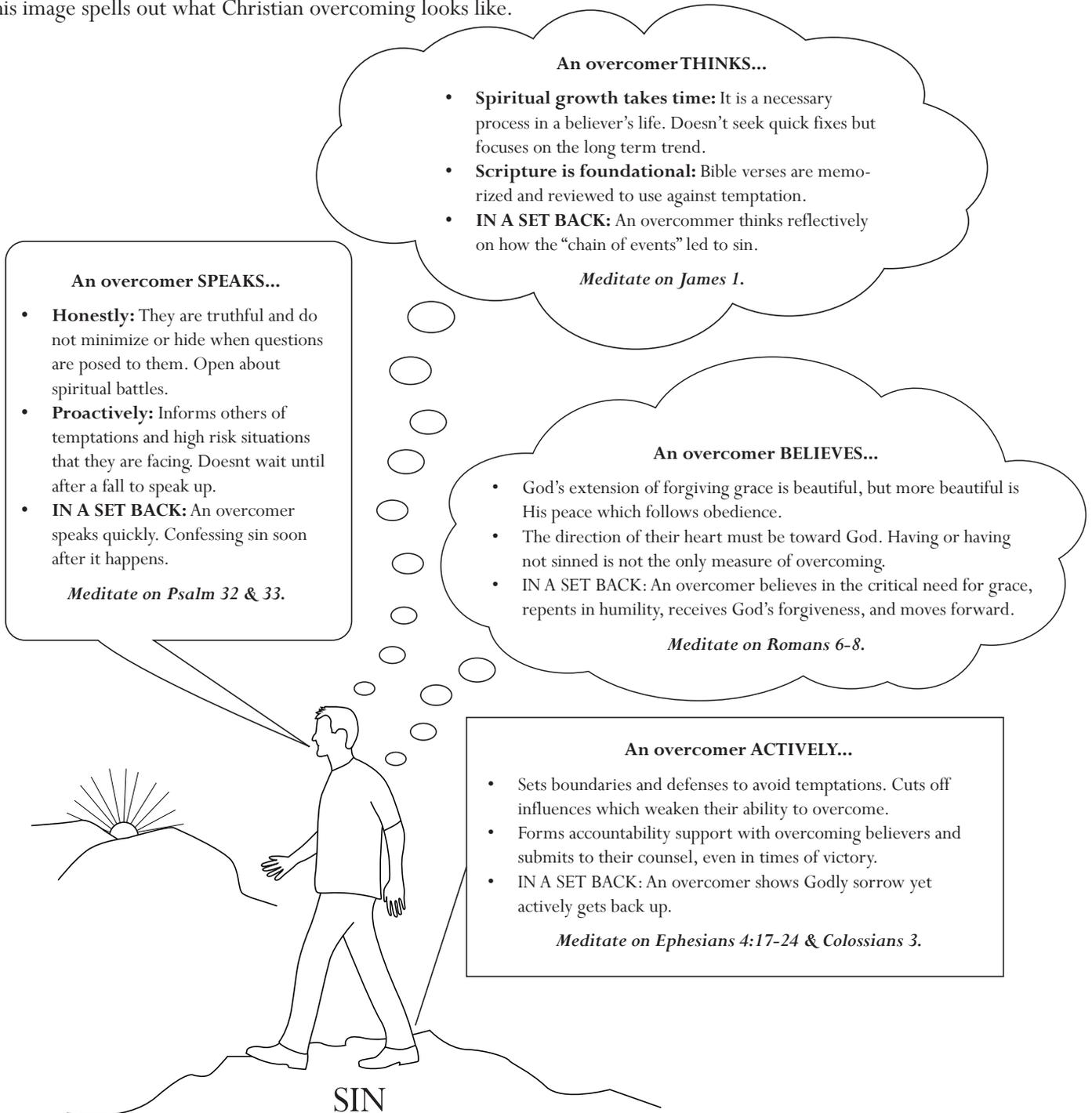
### Worship & Temptation



Video notes:

**What Does an Overcoming Christian Look Like?**

This image spells out what Christian overcoming looks like.



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**Optional Lesson Content:** For more relevant content, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

There is a Christian discipline that has long existed in the community of the church. It is a discipline... like reading, praying, fasting and tithing. While disciplines are classically understood as being done individually, they have a place in our corporate lives also. That is...

***Done together. To each other. For each other.***

And this one is no different. Done individually - yes. Done corporately - **Yes, Yes!** This spiritual discipline is unique from many of the others. It does not require self-sacrifice. Self-discipline. Self-deprivation. The discipline is...

### self-reminding.

Reminding the believing community...

***Who they were. Who Christ is. What He did.  
and what difference that has made in their  
yesterday, today & tomorrow.***

Paul did this over and over. He spoke the Gospel to believers. *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”* **But** after that the kindness and “love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, **but** according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; **which** he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; **that being** justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **That** they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” (Titus 3:3-8) Paul leaves us this discipline to continue.

Practice speaking the Gospel to yourself and others using Paul’s template in *Titus 3*.

#### Speaking the Gospel to yourself

Directions: If you are a believer, then the promise below is yours. Fill in the blank with your name or a personal pronoun (I, me, my).

*For \_\_\_ was sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God \_\_\_ Savior toward \_\_\_ appeared, not by works of righteousness which \_\_\_ have done, but according to his mercy he saved \_\_\_, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on \_\_\_ abundantly through Jesus Christ \_\_\_ Savior; that being justified by his grace, \_\_\_ should be made an heir according to the hope of eternal life... that \_\_\_ might be careful to maintain good works. Titus 3: 3-8*

***“Hell is not a place where everyone is finally caught.  
Hell is a place where men get away with everything.  
A man’s appetite for liquor, drugs, pornography, and television  
is mitigated in this life by the good people around him  
who might catch him destroying himself. But in Hell,  
there are no good people to catch him. There is  
no one in Hell who is good enough to tell a man, “Stop.”  
If a man has ever avoided the people who love him  
that he might get away with his sin, he is already in Hell.”  
— Joshua Gibbs***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE  
& READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Commit your besetting sins to Christ and rejoice in his righteousness.  
Record your prayer in the online course.*

### **This lesson had three goals:**

- We understand the nature of sin as an anesthetic of the soul.
- We understand the role believers play in discipling each other into holiness.
- We learned a few tools in ministering reparative and prohibitive grace.

Church discipline sounds negative. Perhaps we should call it church discipleship and live up to it. There is so much to be gained.

## **Lesson 9**

### **From Insecurity to a Settled Identity**

***Identity is both who we are and who we are not.***

It gives us a sense of belonging, grounding and self worth. Insecurity on the other hand is the pain of self-question. “Am I okay? Am I good enough? Am I loved?” A settled identity is key in answering our self-questions.

Many different aspects contribute to our identity - career, accomplishments, roles and life experiences to name a few. Yet our identity in Christ can singlehandedly win the day.

#### **There are three goals for this lesson:**

- Participants will understand what identity is and why it is important.
- Participants will learn how to have a healthier Christ-centered identity.
- Participants will support one another on the basis of their identity.

**Watch the lesson intro video linked in the course.**

Intro video notes:

## Content

In the video, “Identity,” Ted Witzig Jr. gives a good overview of identity. **Watch the video linked in the lesson.**

### Identity

Video notes:

### Identity Comparison Chart

We learn a lot through comparison. The chart below says a lot through teasing out similarities and differences. Identity is constructed, maintained, achieved and evaluated differently across different cultural contexts. Consider the chart below. It compares and contrasts western culture from eastern culture and Christianity.

	Ancient/Non-Western Cultures	Modern/Western Cultures	Christian
Where does identity come from?	By looking to the group, the family, the clan and identifying one’s role in them.	By looking into oneself and identifying one’s desires.	By repenting of our sin and baptism into Christ’s death and resurrection.
What does success look like?	Successfully fulfilling one’s role in the group, family, or clan.	By living according to one’s “authentic” self.	Receiving Christ’s identity as his brother or sister.
What does success depend on?	Achievement - living up to one’s role. One lives out the role and then receives stability.	Achievement - living out one’s desires. One lives out their self-expression and then receives stability.	Reception - we receive a stable identity and then we live it out.
What is required of self to live out one’s identity?	Self-sacrifice “Live up to the group.”	Self-assertion “Live up to your dreams.”	Self-identification “With Christ”
Who validates one’s identity?	The group, family, or clan.	One’s own self.	Jesus.

**Optional Lesson Content:** For more content on the topic of identity, refer to the resources linked in the lesson.

## The Gospel

Time and time again Paul reminds believers who they are...

***"You are reconciled."***

***"You are holy."***

***"You are unblameable and unproveable."***

Then he tells us how that translates to our experience.

***"Then you are grounded and settled."***

***"Then you seek those things which are above."***

***"Then you put to death the works of the flesh."***

The good news of the Gospel has everything to do with receiving a new identity.

One that gives us:

**Belonging, Security, & Worth.**

***“People mistakenly assume that covenantal (Christ-centered) identity places restrictions on individuality, when the opposite is true. Your uniqueness is not stripped from you; rather your covenant identity enables you to build upon something sure, eternal, and solid.”  
— Pierce Taylor Hibbs***

**REMINDER: MAKE SURE TO FILL OUT THE LESSON QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE & READ THE RESPONSES OF YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS.**

*Prayer: Use this space to celebrate your identity in Christ. Record your prayer in the online course.*

### **There were three goals for this lesson:**

- Now we understand what identity is and why it is important.
- We have learned how to have a healthier Christ-centered identity.
- Now we will support one another on the basis of their identity.

Part of having the mind of Christ is seeing people like He does. That is...

- Seeing yourself according to your identity in Christ.
- Seeing others according to their identity in Christ.

As you read the identity statements of others in your community, embrace and support them according to their identity.